# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

THOMAS DEL GATTO,	) 
Plaintiff,	Case No:
-against-	
HOUSTON'S RESTAURANTS, INC.; JOHN DOES 1-10 and JANE DOES 1-10,	
Defendants.	! 

## **NOTICE OF REMOVAL**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1332(a)(1), 1441 and 1446, defendant Hillstone Restaurant Group, Inc. (erroneously sued as Houston's Restaurants, Inc.) ("Defendant") hereby removes this action from the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division: Bergen County, to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. In support of this notice, Defendant states:

- 1. Plaintiff Thomas Del Gatto ("Plaintiff") commenced this action by filing a Summons and Complaint in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Bergen County under Docket No. L-9899-11.
- 2. Plaintiff served Defendant with a copy of the Summons and Complaint on or about December 13, 2011. This Notice of Removal is timely under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b), as it is filed within thirty days after the receipt by Defendant, through service or otherwise, of a copy of the initial pleading setting forth the claim for relief upon which such action or proceeding is based. 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
- 3. The Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Bergen County is located within the district of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey.

- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a), a copy of all process, pleadings, and orders served upon the removing Defendant, which papers include the Summons and Complaint, are attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- 5. This Court has original jurisdiction over this action under the 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a) because it is a civil action in which the matter in controversy exceeds the sum or value of \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and is between citizens of different states.
- 6. On the face of the Complaint, Plaintiff expressly seeks damages in an amount of \$1 million, exclusive of interest and costs.
- 7. On the face of the Complaint, Plaintiff is a citizen and resident of the State of New Jersey.
- 8. At the time this action was commenced, defendant Hillstone Restaurant Group, Inc. was, and currently is, a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Phoenix, Arizona.
- 9. Defendant hereby appears solely for the purpose of removal and for no other purpose and reserves all defenses available to it.
- 10. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d), a copy of this Notice of Removal is being filed with the Clerk of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Bergen County, and is being served on Plaintiff.
  - 11. Defendant reserves the right to amend or supplement this Notice of Removal.

WHEREFORE, Defendant prays that the above action, now pending in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Bergen County, be removed to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Dated: White Plains, New York January 3, 2012

YANKWITT & McGUIRE, LLP

By: <u>/s/</u>\_\_\_\_

Aytan Y. Bellin, Esq.

Attorneys for Defendant
140 Grand Street, Suite 501
White Plains, New York 10601

Tel: (914) 686-1500 Fax: (914) 801-5930

Attorney(s)  Carlet, Garrison, Klein & Zaretsky, L.L.P.  Office Address  1135 Clifton Avenue, Suite #104  P.O. Box 2666  Town, State, Zip Code Clifton, New Jersey 07015	Superior Court of New Jersey
Telephone Number (973) 777-6200	Bergen COUNTY
Attorney(s) for Plaintiff Thomas Del Gatto	Law DIVISION
THOMAS DEL GATTO	Docket No: L-9899-11
Finintiff(s)	
	CIVIL ACTION
Vs.	
HOUSTON'S RESTAURANTS, INC.; JOHN DOES 1-10	SUMMONS
and JANE DOES 1-10	
Defendant(s)	
From The State of New Jersey To The Defendant(s) Named	Above:
Superior Court in the county listed above within 35 days from counting the date you received it. (The address of each deput if the complaint is one in foreclosure, then you must file you service with the Clerk of the Superior Court, Hughes Justice 0971. A filing fee payable to the Treasurer, State of New Je Statement (available from the deputy clerk of the Superior Cowhen it is, filed. You must also send a copy of your answer of and address appear above, or to plaintiff, if no attorney is nat your rights; you must file and serve a written answer or motion will five up to file and serve a written answer or motion will you do not file and serve a written answer or motion will serve a written answer or motion	aty clerk of the Superior Court is provided.) or written answer or motion and proof of e Complex, P.O. Box 971, Trenton, NJ 08625- arsey and a completed Case Information court) must accompany your answer or motion or motion to plaintiffs attorney whose name med above. A telephone call will not protect ion (with fee of \$135.00 and completed Case efense.
judgment against you for the relief plaintiff demands, plus ir entered against you, the Sheriff may seize your money, wage judgment.	nterest and costs of suit. If judgment is
If you cannot afford an attorney, you may call the Legal or the Legal Services of New Jersey Statewide Hotline at 1-8 these or ces is provided. If you do not have an attorney and may obtain a referral to an attorney by calling one of the Lav numbers is also provided.	888-LSNJ-LAW (1-888-576-5529). A list of lare not eligible for free legal assistance, you wyer Referral Services. A list of these
<u> </u>	nifer M. Perez,
	ínifer M. Perez, erk of the Superior Court
DATED: 12/13/2011	or the Superior Court
Name of Defendant to Be Served: HOUSTON'S RESTAU	JRANTS, INC.
Address of Defendant to Be Served: 1 Riverside Square Mal	Il #181, Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

NOTE: The Case Information Statement is available at www.njcourts.com.

Revised 11/14/2011, CN 10792-English (Appendix XII-A)

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## Directory of Superior Court Deputy Clerk's Offices County Lawyer Referral and Legal Services Offices

#### ATLANTIC COUNTY:

Deputy Glerk of the Superior Court Civil Division, Direct Filing 1201 Bacharach Blvd., First Fl. Atlantic City, NJ 08401 LAWYER REFERRAL (609) 345-3444 LEGAL SERVICES (609) 348-4200

#### BERGEN COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Division, Room 115 Justice Center, 10 Main St. Hackensack, NJ 07601 LAWYER REFERRAL (201) 488-0044 LEGAL SERVICES (201) 487-2166

#### **BURLINGTON COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Central 1 rocessing Office Attn: Judicial Intake First Fl., Courts Facility 49 Rancocas Rd. Mt. Holly, NJ 08060 LAWYER REFERRAL (609) 261-4862 LEGAL SERVICES (800) 496-4570

#### **CAMDEN COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Processing Office Hall of Justice 1st Fl., Suite 150 101 South 5th Street Camden, NJ 08103 LAWYER REFERRAL (856) 964-4520 LEGAL SERVICES (856) 964-2010

#### CAPE MAY COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court 9 N. Main Street Cape May Court House, NJ 08210 LAWYER REFERRAL (609) 463-0313 LEGAL SERVICES (609) 465-3001

#### **CUMBERLAND COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court
Civil Ca. : Management Office
60 West Broad Street
P.O. Box 10
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

LAWYER REFERRAL (856) 696-5550 LEGAL SERVICES (856) 691-0494

#### **ESSEX COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Cu; tomer Service Hall of R; cords, Room 201 465 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07102 LAWYER REFERRAL (973) 622-6204 LEGAL SERVICES (973) 624-4500

## **GLOUCESTER COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Case Management Office Attn: Intake First Fl., Court House I North Broad Street Woodbury, NJ 08096 LAWYER REFERRAL (856) 848-4589 LEGAL SERVICES (856) 848-5360

#### HUDSON COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Superior Court, Civil Records Dept. Brennan Court House—1st Floor 583 Newark Ave. Jersey City, NJ 07306 LAWYER REFERRAL (201) 798-2727 LEGAL SERVICES (201) 792-6363

#### **HUNTERDON COUNTY:**

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Division 65 Park Avenue Flemington, NJ 08822 LAWYER REFERRAL (908) 735-2611 LEGAL SERVICES (908) 782-7979

#### MERCER COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Local Filing Office, Courthouse 175 S. Broad Street, P.O. Box 8068 Trenton, NJ 08650 LAWYER REFERRAL (609) 585-6200 LEGAL SERVICES (609) 695-6249

#### MIDDLESEX COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court, Middlesex Vicinage 2nd Floor - Tower 56 Paterson Street, P.O. Box 2633 New Bra. iswick, NJ 08903-2633 LAWYER REFERRAL (732) 828-0053 LEGAL SERVICES (732) 249-7600

#### MONMOUTH COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Court House P.O. Box 1269 Freehold, NJ 07728-1269 LAWYER REFERRAL (732) 431-5544 LEGAL SERVICES (732) 866-0020

#### MORRIS COUNTY:

Morris County Courthouse Civil Division Washington and Court Streets P. O. Box 910 Morristown, NJ 07963-0910 LAWYER REFERRAL (973) 267-5882 LEGAL SERVICES (973) 285-6911

#### OCEAN COUNTY:

t. :

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court 118 Washington Street, Room 121 P.O. Box 2191 Toms River, NJ 08754-2191 LAWYER REFERRAL (732) 240-3666 LEGAL SERVICES (732) 341-2727

#### PASSAIC COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Division Court House 77 Harrilton Street Paterson, NJ 07505

LAWYER REPERRAL (973) 278-9223 **LEGAL SERVICES** (973) 523-2900

#### SALEM COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Attn: Civil Case Management Office 92 Market Street Salem, NJ 08079

LAWYER REFERRAL (856) 935-5629 **LEGAL SERVICES** (856) 451-0003

#### SOMERSET COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Civil Division P.O. Box 3000 40 North Bridge Street Somerville, N.J. 08876

LAWYER REFERRAL (908) 685-2323 **LEGAL SERVICES** (908) 231-0840

#### SUSSEX COUNTY:

Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court Sussex County Judicial Center 43-47 High Street Newton, NJ 07860

LAWYER REFERRAL (973) 267-5882 LEGAL SERVICES (973) 383-7400

## UNION COUNTY: Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court 1st Fl., Court House

2 Broad Street Elizabeth, NJ 07207-6073 LAWYER REFERRAL (908) 353-4715 **LEGAL SERVICES** (908) 354-4340

#### WARREN COUNTY: Deputy ("erk of the Superior Court Civil Division Office Court Louse 413 Second Street Belvidere, NJ 07823-1500

LAWYER REFERRAL (973) 267-5882 LEGAL SERVICES (908) 475-2010

CARLET, GARRISON, KLEIN	
&ZARETSKY, L.L.P.	
1135 Clifton Avenue, Suite 104	
P.O. Box 2666	
Clifton, New Jersey 07015	
(973) 777-6200	
Attorneys for Plaintiff, Thomas Del Ga	itto

SUPERIOR COURT BERGEN COUNTY FILED.

NOV - 5 2011

Parial Cres.

9899-11

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY LAW DIVISION: BERGEN COUNTY DOCKET NO.

THOMAS DEL GATTO,

Plaintiff,

Civil Action

L'OUSTON'S RESTAURANTS, INC.; JCHN DOES 1-10 and JANE DOES 1-10.

COMPLAINT

Defendants.

Plaintiff, THOMAS DEL GATTO, by way of complaint against defendant, says:

## INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- Thomas Del Gatto ("Del Gatto") is a resident of Englewood Cliffs, Bergen 1. County, New Jersey. He is a prominent member of the business community and an owner of one of the premier catering halls in northern New Jersey.
- Houston's Restaurants, Inc. ("Houston's") is a restaurant chain with various 2. locations, the subject location being in Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey.
- John Does 1-10 and Jane Does 1-10 are agents, employees or servants (hereinafter 3. "agents") of the defendant, whose names are presently unknown.
- Del Gatto was a frequent diner at Houston's and well-known among both the employees and other patrons, many of whom were his acquaintances.

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- 5. In or about the last week of August 2011, Del Gatto; Jayne, his long-time friend; and another couple, Dr. & Mrs. Chesler, were dining together at Houston's.
- 6. Dr. Chesler and his wife were accosted by another couple, one of whom was a former employee of the doctor. Del Gatto was not part of the dispute nor did he know the other couple.
- 7. Del Gatto tried to diffuse the situation between the two parties; however, agents of the defendant attempted to eject not only the disputing parties but also Del Gatto, inter alia, by grabbing his arm.
- 8. Del Gatto advised agents of the defendant that he had no involvement in the matter and was not the cause or continuation of the incident. Despite such advisement, agents of the defendant wrongfully accused Del Gatto of being involved in the altercation. Further, agents of the defendant called mall security and ultimately the Hackensack Police.
  - 9. Del Gatto was escorted from the premises, much to his embarrassment.

#### FIRST COUNT

#### (Defamation)

- 1. Plaintiff reasserts and realleges each and every allegation in the Introductory

  Statement with the same force and effect as if set forth herein at length.
- 2. Defendant, through its agents, made a false, defamatory statement of fact and acted negligently in failing to ascertain the truth or falsity of the statements before communicating the statement, acting in in reckless disregard of its truth or falsity, said accusations being slanderous per se.

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WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment against defendant for compensatory damages, consequential damages, punitive damages, attorney's fees, costs of suit, and such other and further relief as may be equitable and just.

## SECOND COUNT

## (Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress)

- 1. Plaintiff reasserts and realleges each and every allegation in the Introductory

  Statement and the First Count with the same force and effect as if set forth herein at length.
- 2. Defendant, through its agents, directed extreme and outrageous conduct toward piaintiff, intentionally or recklessly in disregard of the probability that emotional distress would follow.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment against defendant for compensatory damages, consequential damages, punitive damages, attorney's fees, costs of suit, and such other and further relief as may be equitable and just.

#### THIRD COUNT

#### (Battery)

- 1. Plaintiff reasserts and realleges each and every allegation in the Introductory

  Statement and the First and Second Counts with the same force and effect as if set forth herein at length.
- 2. Agents of the defendant intentionally and without consent, with a wanton disregard of the plaintiff's personal rights and sensitivities, grabbed plaintiff by the arm in an attempt to wrongly eject him.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment against defendant for compensatory damages, consequential damages, punitive damages, attorney's fees, costs of suit, and such other and further relief as may be equitable and just.

## **DEMAND FOR JURY**

Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury of six (6) on all issues.

## **DEMAND FOR DAMAGES**

Plaintiff hereby demands damages in the amount of \$1,000,000.00.

### **DESIGNATION OF TRIAL COUNSEL**

Plaintiff hereby designates Charles Rabolli, Jr., Esq. as Trial Counsel in this matter.

DATED:

÷ :

Clifton, New Jersey December 2, 2011

CARLET, GARRISON, KLEIN

& ZARETSKY, L.L.P.

Attorneys for Plaintiff/Thomas Del Gatto

Bv:

CHARLES RABOLLI, JR.

## CERTIFICATION AS TO OTHER PENDING ACTIONS

I hereby certify that the matters in controversy are not the subject of any other actions pending in any Court or of a pending arbitration proceeding, and no other actions or arbitration proceeding is contemplated at present.

DATED:

December 2, 2011

CHARLES RABOLLI JR

## Appendix XII-B1

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## CIVIL CASE INFORMATION STATEMENT (CIS)

FOR USE BY CL	EROS OFFICE OTLY
PAYMENT TYPE:	CK CG CA
CHG/CK NO.	
AMOUNT.	
OVERPAYMENT:	<del></del>

Use for initial Law Division Civil Part pleadings (not motions) under Rule 4:5-1 Pleading will be rejected for filing, under Rule 1:6-6(c), If information above the black bar is not completed or attorney's alguature is not affixed			:6-6(c),	AMOUNT:  OVERPAYMENT:  BATCH NUMBER:			
ATTORNEY/PRO SE NAME			E NUMBER	COUN	ITY OF VE	YUE	·
Charles Rabolli, Jr., Esq.		(973) 777	973) 777-6200 Bergen				
FIRM NAME (if applicable) Carlet, Garrison, Klein & Zaretsky, L.L.P.				DOCK	ET NUMBE	R (when ava	riable) 777-/
OFFICE ADDRESS 1135 Clifton Avenue, Sulte 104 Clifton, New Jersey 07013				Com	MENT TYP Ipiaint		
	T 2.22	-		JURY	DEMAND	YES	□ No
NAME OF PARTY (e.g., John Doe, Plaintiff THOMAS DEL GATTO, Plaintiff		MAS DEL	GATTO, Plain ES 1-10 and				
CASE TYPE NUMBER (See reverse side for listing)	IF YOU	U HAVE CHEC	SIONAL MALPRA KED "YES," SEE OBLIGATION TO	N.J.S A. 2A:	53 A -27 AI		NO BLE CASE LAW
RELATED CASES, MENDING?	IF YE	s, Li <b>st</b> Dock	et numbers				
DO YOU ANTICIPATE ADDING ANY PARTIES (artisting out of same transaction or occurrence)?	NAME	of Defenda	ants primary	INSURANCE	COMPAN	Y (If known)	None
YES NO	<u> </u>						UMUNOWN
THE INFORMATION PROVIDED						EVIDENC	Έ.
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USE THIS SPACE O ALERT THE COURT TO ANY SP ACCELERATED DISPOSITION	PECIAL C	CHARAC	CTERISTICS THA	NT MAY WAR	RANT INDI	IVIDUAL MAN	iagement or
DO YOU OR YOUR CLIENT NEED ANY ORBABILITY	ССОММО	DATIONS?	if yes, please	IDENTIFY THE	REQUESTER	D ACCOMMODA	TION
WILL AN INTERPRETER BE NEEDED?  YES NO	$\Omega_I$		if yes, for wa	AT LANGUAGE	?		
I certify that confidential personal ideatifiers. reducted from all documents submitted in the	aye/se	en redacted in accorden	from docume ce with <i>Rule</i> 1	nts now su :38-7(b).	bmitted to	o the court,	and will be
AYTORNEY SIGNATURE:	7			<del></del>			

Effective 01/03/2011, CN 10517-English

page 1 of 2



# CIVIL CASE INFORMATION STATEMENT

	Use for initial pleading	(CIS) ngs (not motions) unde <i>r Rule</i> 4:5-1	
CASE TYPES	(Choose one and enter number of case type	e in appropriate space on the reverse side.)	
Track 1 151 175 302 399 502 505 506 510 511 512 80.1	- 150 days' discovery NAME CHANGE FORFEITURE TENANCY REAL PROPERTY (other than Tenancy, Contract, Co. BOOK ACCOUNT (debt collection matters only) OTHER INSURANCE CLAIM (including declaratory in PIP COVERAGE UM or UIM CLAIM (coverage issues only) ACTION ON NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT LEMON LAW SUMMARY ACTION OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (summary action) OTHER (briefly describe nature of action)	ondemnation, Complex Commercial or Construction)	
305 509 599 30.15 605 605 610 621	- 300 days' discovery  CONSTRUCTION  EMPLOYMENT (other than CEPA or LAD)  CONTRACTICOMMERCIAL TRANSACTION  AUTO NEGLIGENCE - PERSONAL INJURY (non-ve 'AUTO NEGLIGENCE - PERSONAL INJURY (verbal  PERSONAL INJURY  AUTO NEGLIGENCE - PROPERTY DAMAGE  UM or UIM CLAIM (includes bodily injury)  TORT - OTHER	erbal (hreshold)   Ihreshold)	
005 301 602 604 606 607 608 609 616	- 450 days' discovery CIVE RIGHTS CONDEMNATION ASSAULT AND BATTERY MEDICAL MALPRACTICE PRODUCT LIABILITY PROFESSIONAL MALPRACTICE TOXIC TORT DEFAMATION WHISTLEBLOWER / CONSCIENTIOUS EMPLOYEE INVERSE CONDEMNATION LAW AGAINST DISCRIMINATION (LAD) CASES	PROTECTION ACT (CEPA) CASES	
158 303 508 513 514 620	- Active Case Management by Individual Jude Environmental/Environmental Coverage Mt. Laurel Complex Commercial Complex Construction Insurance Fraud False Claims act Actions in Lieu of Prerogative Writs	ige / 450 days' discovery LITIGATION	
29) 265	ally Managed Litigation (Track IV) ZELNORM STRYKER TRIDENT HIP IMPLANTS PRUDENTIAL TORT LITIGATION	290 POMPTON LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL LITIGATION 291 PELVIC MESHIGYNECARE 292 PELVIC MESHIBARD	N
248 286 271 274 275 277 278 279	Tort (Track IV) CIBA GEIGY HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT) ACCUTANE RISPERDAL/SEROQUEL/ZYPREXA ORTHO EVRA MAHWAH TOXIC DUMP SITE ZOME TAVAREDIA GADOLINIUM	281 BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB ENVIRONMENTAL 282 FOSAMAX 283 DIGITEK 284 NUVARING 286 LEVAQUIN 287 YAZ/YASMIN/OCELLA 601 ASBESTOS	
in the gas	eve this case requires a track other than that provide under "Case Characteristics." see check off each applicable category	dad above, please indicate the reason on Side 1.  Putative Class Action	
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BERGEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE SUPERIOR COURT LAW DIV BERGEN COUNTY JUSTICE CTR RM 415 HACKENSACK NJ 07601-7680

COURT TELEPHONE NO. (201) 527-2600 COURT HOURS

TRACK ASSIGNMENT NOTICE

DATE: DECEMBER 06, 2011
RE: DELGATTO VS HOUSTONS RESTAURANTS INC
DOCKET: BER L -009899 11

THE ABOVE CASE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO: TRACK 2.

DISCOVERY IS 300 DAYS AND RUNS FROM THE FIRST ANSWER OR 90 DAYS FROM SERVICE ON THE FIRST DEFENDANT, WHICHEVER COMES PIRST.

THE PRETRIAL JUDGE ASSIGNED IS: HON BRIAN R. MARTINOTTI

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT TEAM OO4 AT: (201) 527-2600.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE TRACK IS INAPPROPRIATE YOU MUST FILE A CERTIFICATION OF GOOD CAUSE WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE FILING OF YOUR PLEADING.
PLAIN'IFF MUST SERVE COPIES OF THIS FORM ON ALL OTHER PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH R.4:5A-2.

ATTENTION:

ATT: CHARLES RABOLLI JR
CARLET GARRISON KLEIN & Z
CARLET GARRISON KLEIN & ZARETSKY
1135 CLIFTON AVE PO BOX 2666
CLIFTON NJ 07015-2666

JUBRM11

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## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Aytan Y. Bellin, of Yankwitt & McGuire, LLP, hereby certify that on January 4, 2012, I served the foregoing Notice of Removal by First-Class mail upon the following:

Charles Rabolli, Jr.
Carlet, Gararison, Klein & Zaretsky, LLP
1135 Clifton Avenue, Suite 104
P.O. Box 2666
Clifton, New Jersey 07015

Dated: White Plains, New York January 4, 2012

/s/Aytan Y. Bellin Aytan Y. Bellin